

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 6, 9 through 12, 15 through 18, 21 and 22 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent No. 4,409,695 issued October 18, 1983 to Johnston *et al.* ("Johnston") in view of U.S. patent No. 5,608,932 issued March 11, 1997 to Hasegawa ("Hasegawa"). Additionally, claims 7 and 8 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnston in view of Hasegawa and U.S. patent No. 5,131,105 issued July 21, 1992 to Harrawood *et al.* ("Harrawood"); claim 13 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnston in view of Hasegawa and U.S. patent No. 4,926,457 issued May 15, 1990 to Poehner *et al.* ("Poehner"); claim 14 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnston in view of Hasegawa and U.S. patent No. 5,393,938 issued February 28, 1995 to Bumbalough ("Bumbalough"); and claims 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnston in view of Hasegawa and U.S. patent No. 5,295,276 issued March 22, 1994 to Richards *et al.* ("Richards").

Applicant now states that it does not in any manner admit that either Richards or Bumbalough is prior art to the invention of the present application and does not waive any right to later present evidence establishing the same. Hasegawa, however, on which each of the foregoing rejections is at least in part based, does not qualify as prior art to the invention of the present application and, as a result, Applicant respectfully submits that each such rejection is improper. In particular, Hasegawa is effective as "prior art" under 35 USC § 102(e) no earlier than April 6, 1995. The present application, however, claims a priority date under 35 USC § 120 of January 31, 1995. As a result, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the foregoing rejections.¹

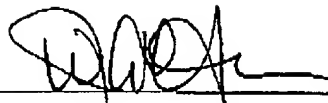
In light of all the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the claims and passage to issue of this present application.

¹ Although Applicant does generally traverse each of the foregoing rejections on the merits, Applicant does reserve any specific argument until such time as may be appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

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